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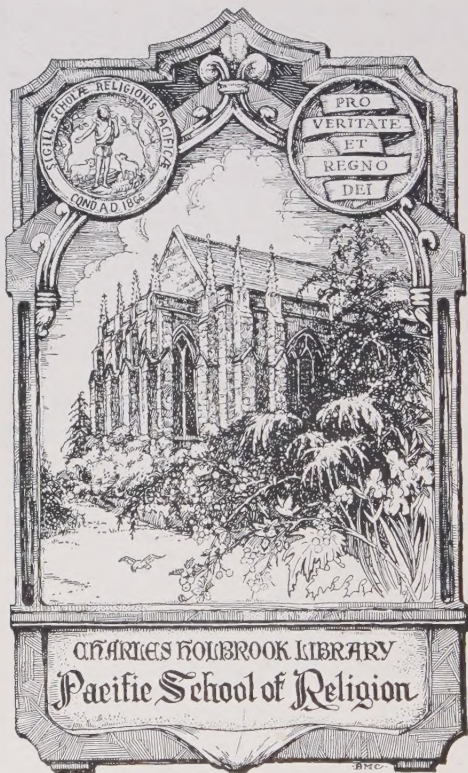
A MANUAL OF CONFIRMATION

BY
ALEXANDER LYONS, PH. D.
RABBI OF TEMPLE BETH ELOHIM, BROOKLYN, N. Y.



NEW YORK
BLOCH PUBLISHING COMPANY
1911

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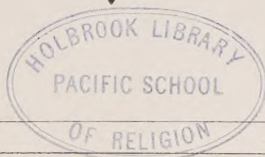
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TO THE
HONORABLE JACOB BRENNER
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

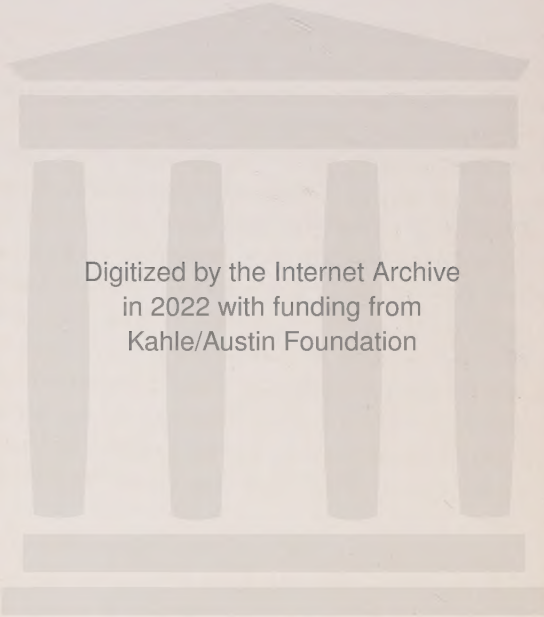
whose devotion to Sabbath School interests for over a quarter of a century is entitled to extensive recognition, this Manual is dedicated as a token of appreciative admiration by

THE AUTHOR.

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TO THE TEACHER

THE aim of this manual is to furnish material for instruction and study in preparing for confirmation. It is not exhaustive but suggestive. It is purposely limited in the number of its lessons for the reason that it is intended to cover the period of preparation which should begin with November after the holidays and continue till confirmation about the beginning of June. Allowing for weekly instruction and reviews from time to time the lessons will be found to cover the mentioned period nicely. And yet the apparently limited material here furnished will be found upon closer examination to be so inclusive in suggestiveness as to satisfy both the more exacting teacher and the more ambitious pupil.

The manual is intended to be used with constant reference to the Bible both at home and in class. The references are to the Leeser edition. The questions following each paragraph are to be studied at home and their answers given in class. Additional references may be given when needful by the teacher who may be expected to develop more fully any suggestions contained in the lesson. Special attention should be given to the Bible references and as

much memorization of Biblical passages as the pupils find possible.

The author has found the material and method here employed helpful to many of his pupils during many years and has been encouraged by this fact to try by publication to extend like benefit to others. It must, however, be borne in mind in connection with the use of this booklet that its usefulness in the direction for which it is intended will be determined in larger part by the seriousness and reverence of the teacher or parent by whom it may be used. May it lead Young Israel to such a knowledge and admiration of Jewish teaching that they will be inspired to echo the sentiment of their ancestors at Sinai: All that the Lord hath spoken we will do and hear.

AT SINAI

LESSON I

Shabuoth

Confirmation Day, or Shabuoth as it is called in Hebrew, comes on the sixth day of the third Jewish month called Sivan. It reminds us of God's giving of the Torah or Ten Commandments and other religious teachings to Israel at Mt. Sinai. A thrilling account of this is given in the nineteenth chapter of the book of Exodus. Shabuoth means "Weeks" and is probably so called because it comes exactly seven weeks after the first day of Passover.

Questions

1. What is the Hebrew of Confirmation Day?
2. What does the name mean?
3. Why is it given to the day?
4. When does Confirmation Day come?
5. What does it remind us of?
6. What does Exodus, Chapter XIX, tell about the giving of the Ten Commandments? Describe the scene. What does the chapter teach with reference to God's relation to Israel? What duty to God does it impose upon Israel?
7. Where is Mt. Sinai?
8. Read Psalms I, XIX, XXXVII, CXIX, and tell what they teach about the Torah, or the Law of the Lord as it is called in English.
9. Memorize Psalm XXXVII, 25-31.

LESSON II

The Purpose of Confirmation

The purpose of Confirmation is not to lead us into the ranks of the Jewish people or to place upon us the duties of the Jewish religion. Even if we are not confirmed we are Jews and the teachings of Judaism are our duties. We are Jews when we are born of Jewish parents just as the child of American parents is an American. One not born a Jew can become such by conscientiously accepting and following the principles of the Jewish religion, just as a foreigner can become an American by accepting and obeying the laws and ideals of the American people.

There is nothing mysterious or secret about Confirmation. Its purpose is to acquaint us with and to impress upon us what is meant by being a true Jew. We must not be content to be Jews merely by birth, but also in knowledge and conviction. On Confirmation Day, which comes after months of instruction, we show not only that we are born Jews but that through our knowledge we desire to remain Jews. The Bible tells us (Exodus XXIV.) that when Moses returned from Mt. Sinai, where he had been speaking with God and brought to the people God's teachings, they said: "Whatever God has spoken we will do." On Confirmation Day we publicly proclaim that what God imposed

upon us as Jews at our birth we will through the rest of our lives do. And as good Jews we must keep in mind that it is not sufficient for us to know God's teachings, we must be sure to do them. Again and again the Bible and later Jewish teachers warn us against being contented with mere knowledge. Our knowledge must lead us to deed. For instance, the second commandment (Exodus XX 3-6) says that we must not only love God, that is have the right feeling for Him, in order to merit his mercy, we must also carry out His commands. The fourth commandment (Exodus XX 9) teaches that we must not only remember the Sabbath, we must also observe it. Psalm XV in telling of the kind of person that is acceptable to God speaks of one that does certain beautiful things. Even the ceremonies and symbols of our religious life must not be considered as sufficient to fulfill our duty. The book of Numbers (XV., 38-39) says emphatically with reference to certain religious ceremonies that when we look upon them we are to be reminded to do what God has commanded. The Jewish teachers of older times said among other important things on this subject that whoever knows God's teachings and does not carry them out would be better off not to have been born.

Questions

1. What is the purpose of Confirmation?

2. In what two ways can one become a Jew?
3. What do we proclaim with regard to ourselves on Confirmation Day?
4. Is knowledge of God's teachings sufficient?
5. Give instances of biblical teaching on this subject.
6. What does ancient Jewish teachings say on the matter?
7. What is the purpose of our religious ceremonies?
8. Memorize Psalm XV.

LESSON III

The Ten Commandments

We have learned that Confirmation reminds us of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. We certainly ought to know these commandments and what they mean. They have been of the highest importance in the history of mankind. They are at the basis of our civilization. If they should be disregarded men would soon sink to the level of beastlike savages. We Jews ought to be proud that through our people these commandments were made known to the rest of the world. We should know them and show our pride in them by showing their value and beauty in our lives.

Questions

1. What is the importance of the Ten Commandments?
2. Why should we be especially interested in them?
3. How should this interest be shown?
4. Read the Ten Commandments in Exodus XX and give the traits of character of a Jew that observes them.

LESSON IV

First Commandment

I am the Lord Thy God who brought Thee out of the Land of Egypt and out of the House of Bondage.

This is not a commandment but an explanation or introduction to the commandments that follow. It tells of the authority from whom they came. It says that He was the great Being who freed Israel from bondage and therefore had the right to impose such laws as were proper for them to observe in freedom. So while the first of the commandments is not a command in form, it really does command us to accept as God the Being who was great and wise and good enough to redeem Israel from their bitter slavery. Even without being commanded we should joyously accept and worship God by obeying His commandments. It is only a natural and grateful recognition of His goodness. To do otherwise is to be guilty of the disgrace of ingratitude.

Questions

1. What is the first commandment?
2. What does it teach?
3. Why should we obey God even without being commanded?
4. Read the story of Israel's liberation in Exodus I-XV and be prepared to answer such questions on it as your teacher may ask.

LESSON V

Second Commandment

Thou shalt have no other gods beside me. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a zealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, but showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

In this commandment we are taught what is called Monotheism, that is, the belief in an only God. It is a belief that is at the basis of all Jewish teaching. It is proclaimed in all public Jewish worship and daily private prayer in the words familiar to every true Jew: *Sh'ma Jisroel Ahdoenoy Elohaynoo Ahdoenoy Echod*. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One!

This belief has been an inspiring conviction to the Jew through his entire history leading him to live for it and, when necessary, even to die for it. It still finds expression in some form upon the lip or in the mind of the true Jew upon all of his occasions of gladness or gloom.

To appreciate the greatness of this commandment we need to remember that when it was given to the Israelites they were surrounded by peoples who, like the Egyptians, believed in many gods. The entire world was said to be

divided into countless departments over each of which one or more gods ruled. There are peoples who still have such a belief. Against this Judaism has always protested as it does emphatically in this commandment in the grand idea that all other beings are inferior to God and subject to Him.

This commandment does more than teach that there is only one God. It tells us what is equally important, that He is a spirit. We may see His wondrous doings in nature or in human life, we may, if we are truly good, feel His presence within us, but we cannot see God himself. Accordingly we are forbidden to try to represent God in any way. He is too great and grand to be represented by anything that we can imagine. It would be inferior to Him and so do Him gross injustice. Therefore all idolatry which attempts to represent God is wrong. If we desire to worship God it must not be through idols and images but in pure thoughts, noble feelings, and beautiful deeds.

Since God is supreme and so sublime we must not permit anything to come between Him and our affection for Him. What we have good reason to believe to be God's will must be our will. To Him or for Him we must, if necessary, sacrifice our most precious possessions just as Abraham consented to do. (Read Genesis XXII.) Our very life is subject to God's call.

The seriousness of this commandment is emphasized in the threat of terrible punishment

which God promises to inflict upon those who disobey it, and in the promise of God's great kindness to those who are obedient.

Questions

1. What is the second commandment?
2. What is the meaning of Monotheism?
3. What is its importance in Jewish teaching and worship?
4. Against what has this commandment always been a protest?
5. What other important teaching is contained in it?
6. Read Exodus XXXIII and tell what God says about seeing him.
7. What does this commandment forbid? Why?
8. How must we worship God?
9. Read Psalms XXIX and XCVI and tell what they teach with regard to the worship with which we should bow to God.
10. What are we to understand by holiness?
11. What importance in our lives does God's greatness give Him?
12. Tell the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son.
13. Read Deuteronomy VI, 1-9 and tell what it says about our love for God.
14. How is the seriousness of this commandment emphasized?

LESSON VI

Third Commandment

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

This commandment is God's prohibition of the dreadful sin of perjury or false swearing. It also warns us against using God's name or referring to Him in any way that is untruthful or irreverential. It requires us to be true to our word and to avoid vulgar language. Speech is one of God's greatest gifts to mankind and should only be used in ways that are beautiful and good.

Violation of this commandment is a serious sin that is threatened with certain punishment, for unless men are trustworthy in their dealings with one another they cannot get along together and civilization with all of its blessings would be impossible. The Jewish teachers of olden times attached such importance to this commandment that they said that when God announced it the whole world trembled.

Questions

1. What is the third commandment?
2. What does it warn against?
3. What does it require of us?
4. Why is this commandment so important?
5. How did the Jewish teachers of olden times indicate its importance?
6. Read Zechariah V, 3; Malachi II, 2; Proverbs XXX, 7-9 and tell what they teach with reference to the use of God's name.

LESSON VII

Fourth Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath day of the Lord thy God; on it thou shalt not do any work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.

In this commandment God orders that we work six days and rest on the seventh. It teaches that both work and rest after work are sacred because God is represented (see Genesis II, 1-3) as having worked and rested, and whatever God does is a model for our conduct. To do what we have good reason to believe God does and wishes us to do is to be religious. For instance when we are commanded by God (see Leviticus XIX) to help the poor, to be considerate of the afflicted, to be just, to avoid slander, to keep from hatefulness and revenge, to honor old people, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, to obey these commands is to be religious. Of course, we cannot always see the wisdom of God's doings and commandments. This is because our knowledge is so limited and our understanding so superficial. Where we do understand we see the wisdom and justice

and goodness of God's ways, where we do not understand we must have faith and obey. Trust in God is the foundation of a religious life. When the Psalmist (see Psalm XXXVII, 3) says: Trust in God and do good, he tells us briefly what Judaism means by religion.

This fourth commandment makes kindly consideration for others also a divine duty. Not only are we to rest after work but we must allow to others dependent upon us opportunity to do likewise. They are God's children just as we are and must be given opportunity to make the most of their lives just as we do who are more fortunate than they are. Even the beast must receive our thoughtful care in order that it may rest after its labor. The animal is a creature and child of God just as we are and so has claim upon our kindness as a kind of brother. Judaism, therefore, commands us to treat it humanely (see Deuteronomy XXII 6, 10; XXV, 4; Leviticus XXII, 27-8; Proverbs XXII, 10; Genesis XXIV).

The rest which God requires in this commandment does not mean idleness. It must be made holy by being used in religious service and otherwise so that it will make us better in body, mind, heart, and character. So important is this commandment that in ancient times those who violated it were punished with death. An interesting instance of this may be found in Numbers XV, 32-6. While we no longer punish with death those who disregard the Sabbath,

God has so made us that if we cease to respect and observe the day we harm ourselves physically, intellectually and morally.

Questions

1. What is the fourth commandment?
2. Why are work and rest sacred?
3. What does it mean to be religious? Give illustrations.
4. Why can we not always understand God's commandments?
5. What is the foundation of a religious life?
6. Give a good reason for faith in God.
7. What, according to Judaism, is necessary to religion?
8. What duty to others does this commandment teach? Why? Give illustrations of this duty?
9. What should we understand by Sabbath rest?
10. How was this commandment viewed in Bible times? Give an illustration.
11. What would be the consequence of our disregard of the Sabbath?

LESSON VIII

Fifth Commandment

Honor thy father and thy mother in order that thy days may be prolonged upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

The importance of this commandment may be seen in the fact that it is placed immediately after the first four which speak especially of God. We are thus shown that according to Jewish teaching our parents are next to God in holiness. The child that mistreats them is considered to be deserving of the punishment of death (see Exodus XXI, 15, 17). Honoring them is the same as honoring God, dishonoring them is dishonoring God. And this is proper, because from the moment that God gives us life through our parents they surround us with a love and devotion as beautiful and as bountiful as that which comes from God. It is only after we have become parents ourselves that we can truly appreciate how wonderful and how holy is the love of a father and mother.

This commandment teaches that if we honor our parents our life will be prolonged. We should honor them even without the hope of a reward. True goodness finds itself sufficiently rewarded in the happiness that immediately follows upon doing what it believes to be its duty. But if we conduct ourselves toward our parents as we should we shall find our lives to be longer

in the sense that they will contain more of true happiness than they would otherwise have had.

We should honor our parents in conduct that will be a joy to them while they live and an honor to their memory after they have passed away. No matter how long we outlive them their claim upon our respect never ends.

We are told that when Joseph made himself known to his brothers after their long separation his first question was: Doth my father yet live? (See Genesis XLV). The thought of parents will be prominent in the mind and heart of every worthy child upon all occasions of life. He will ask: What will father say? What will mother think?

Read: Deuteronomy XXI, 18-21; XXVII, 16; Proverbs XIII, 1; XV, 5; XVII, 25; XIX, 26; XX, 20; XXVIII, 7, 24; XXX, 17.

Questions

1. What is the fifth commandment?
2. How is the importance of this commandment indicated?
3. What does Jewish teaching say of the importance of parents?
4. Why are they so holy?
5. In what way is our respect for parents rewarded?
6. What is the reward of true goodness?
7. How should we honor our parents?
8. When may this respect cease?
9. What does the life of Joseph teach us with regard to the proper attitude of a child to his parents?
10. Give some Biblical teachings about filial conduct.

LESSON IX

Sixth Commandment

Thou shalt not murder.

The importance of this commandment need not be pointed out. Only a being that is savage or brutal will destroy human life unless it be in self-defense or for the good of mankind. Life comes directly from God and in general He alone has the right to take it away. So that he that murders another or by suicide puts an end to his own life is guilty of one of the worst sins. Suicide is murder and is not to be forgiven unless it results from an unbalanced mind.

This commandment not only means the outright killing of another human being, it refers also to every act of ours by which we do damage to the life or happiness of another human being. Ancient Jewish teaching says that he that embarrasses a fellow-man in public is guilty of a kind of murder. Whenever we interfere with the rights of others and prevent them from realizing the possibilities of life with which God endowed them we are also guilty of murder in a certain degree. If through carelessness of ourselves we shorten our own lives and lessen our usefulness we are guilty of suicide which is self-murder.

The violation of this commandment is punished in Jewish law and in our civilization with death. We ought, however, to regard human

life as so mysterious and sacred as not to permit ourselves to put to death even a murderer. He should in some way be compelled during the rest of his life to serve society or those he has injured, and thus make up, to some extent, for the terrible wrong he committed.

Questions

1. What is the sixth commandment?
2. Explain its importance.
3. Why is suicide wrong?
4. What does this commandment include besides outright killing?
5. What is the punishment for murder according to Judaism and our present law?
6. Is this punishment proper?

LESSON X

Seventh Commandment

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Adultery is one of the worst sins and means any act that interferes with the sacred union of a husband and wife. The seriousness of this commandment is shown in the fact that in ancient Jewish law its violation was punished with death. Its very position in the Ten Commandments calls attention to its importance. It follows the prohibition of murder and comes before that of theft. It would thus have us know that whoever is guilty of adultery is to be branded with the double sin and disgrace of a murderer and thief. Such a one destroys a home and steals its happiness.

There is no place upon earth more holy than home. There our life begins, there love dwells and surrounds our life with the encouragement and happiness of its sweet sympathy and sacrifice. There we first learn through our earthly parents of the great Heavenly Parent, our Heavenly Father. Whatever we may become or do that is good is due largely to the influences amid which we begin life in our home. No wonder then that home is so holy. No wonder that he is so base who breaks up a home by doing wrong.

Questions

1. What is the seventh commandment?

2. What are we to understand by adultery?
3. How is the seriousness of this commandment shown?
4. What may the adulterer be called? Why?
5. Why is home so holy?
6. What may children do to make home happier for their parents?

LESSON XI

Eighth Commandment

Thou shalt not steal.

This commandment comes properly after the prohibition of murder and adultery. Not only is life sacred but the right to possess things is necessary to life and happiness and therefore next in sacredness to life itself. So that he that steals is next in guilt to the murderer and adulterer.

The importance of this commandment to the civilization and peace of the world is next to that of the two preceding. The murderer and the adulterer are dangerous to the welfare of the world. So is the thief.

This commandment includes more than some people seem to think. There are people who will take advantage of others in little things who would be shocked even to think of doing so in larger matters. There are others, for instance in public offices, who would not think anything of stealing from a society, a city, or a state, which means a large number of persons, who would not even think of taking from a private individual the least thing that does not belong to them. God says simply in this commandment: Thou shalt not steal. Its meaning is that it is wrong to take or keep from others what properly belongs to them whether it be small or great, whether they be many or it be

only one. Whoever is guilty of such wrong is a thief and will at some time in some way suffer in consequence because God sees and knows all that we do and will hold us responsible for our conduct. We may deceive mankind but cannot deceive God.

This commandment contains special warning for boys and girls. Boys and girls sometimes thoughtlessly stoop to little falsehoods in speech or dishonesties in action. It may be in trivial matters or it may be in little deceptions practiced at home or in school. This commandment contains this warning: Beware, boys and girls, of these little wrongful acts. Each one makes the next easier and in time when it is too late it will be found that little falsehoods and dishonesties mark the beginning of the thief.

Questions

1. What is the eighth commandment?
2. Why is it placed after the prohibition of adultery and murder?
3. What does it include?
4. What may be said of the violation of it?
5. Give a quotation from Psalm 94 that tells of God's knowledge of our conduct.
6. What is the special warning of this commandment for boys and girls?
7. Give some illustrations showing how little wrongful acts lead to larger ones.

LESSON XII

Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

This commandment warns against misrepresenting others and emphasizes the sacredness of truth. Truth, according to Judaism, is holy. Wherever truth is found God is present. The Bible tells frequently of God's love of truth and hatred of falsehood. The beauty of truthfulness and the ugliness of falsehood are plain to every pure mind. Truth makes our life more beautiful. Falsehood lowers us and makes us contemptible.

This commandment refers not only to misrepresentation through speech but also in any conduct through which we give wrong impressions of others. It further implies that we must not only not give out untruth about others but refuse to receive it from others as in gossip. It is a Jewish teaching that "Both he that spreads and he that accepts misrepresentation of others should be treated without pity."

Questions

1. What is the ninth commandment?
2. What does it warn against?
3. Read Proverbs XVI, 6; VI, 16-19; Psalm CXIX, 160; XCI, 4, and give the teachings they contain about truth and falsehood.

4. What forms of misrepresentation does this commandment prohibit?
5. What does Jewish teaching say about spreading and receiving untruth?
6. Give some illustration showing the value of truthfulness and the evil of untruthfulness.

LESSON XIII

Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his animal, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

This commandments warns us against the sin of envious or selfish desires. By such we are lead to try to secure for ourselves even in a wrongful way, if necessary, what properly belongs to others. Hate, dishonesty, and even murder spring from such desires. But they are sinful even if they do not result in such conduct. God knows our every thought and feeling and holds us responsible for them when they are evil. He desires and commands us to be pure within and without. To think impure thoughts taints the mind just as the handling of dirt soils the hand.

The terrible evil of jealousy and of covetousness to which it leads may be seen in the mean cruelty which Joseph suffered through his brothers (Genesis XXXVII) or in the murder committed for King Ahab (I Kings XXI).

While disregard of this commandment leads to some of the greatest sins its opposite, unselfishness, leads to generosity, sympathy, pleasure in the happiness of others, and thus gives rise to some of the most beautiful virtues. Our ancient Jewish teachers therefore very

properly said that the tenth commandment is of equal importance with all the rest together. Guard your mind against evil thoughts and you will keep your conduct free from evil actions. Think only kind, pure, and beautiful thoughts; entertain only generous, loving feelings and your life will be as beautiful as it is good.

Questions

1. What is the tenth commandment?
2. What does it warn against? Why?
3. What does God demand of us with regard to purity?
4. Give an example from the life of Joseph of the evil of jealousy.
5. Give an example of covetousness from the life of Ahab.
6. What importance did the ancient Jewish teachers attach to this commandment? Why?
7. What is the influence of good and evil thoughts and feelings?

HOLY DAYS

THE following holy days were commanded by God at Sinai:

LESSON XIV

Pesach

Pesach, or Passover, comes on the fifteenth day of the first Jewish month, Nissan. It is to be celebrated according to the Bible seven days (see Leviticus XXIII, 4-8). Later Jewish teachers added an eighth day. Its first evening is specially celebrated at home by a solemn and yet joyous service called the Seder, which reviews the incidents of Israel's oppression at different periods of their history and gratefully glorifies God's wondrous protection. On the first and last days of the festival public worship must be held and all unnecessary labor omitted. The most conspicuous symbol of Pesach is Matzah, unleavened bread, which is to be eaten throughout the festal week, while everything that contains leaven must be omitted. The Matzah is called "the bread of affliction" and serves appropriately as a reminder of the bread our ancestors were compelled to eat on their journey from Egypt and frequently thereafter.

The purpose of Pesach is to remind us of Israel's enslavement in Egypt and of God's wonderful deliverance through Moses, the thrilling and dramatic account of which may be read in the opening chapters of Exodus. The festival

impresses upon us that human liberty is sacred and must not be unjustly interfered with or used in ways displeasing to God. It also teaches that though God is the Supreme Being of the universe He watches tenderly over the welfare of each and every one of His children. In the words of the Psalmist (CXLV, 19) "their cry will He hear and save them."

Pesach could properly be celebrated by all mankind as the birthday of human freedom as a Divine institution, because every normal human creature must have the opportunity which liberty furnishes to realize the finer possibilities with which each of us has in some measure been gifted. Whoever celebrates the festival in the proper spirit and not by a meaningless observance of its ceremonials will grow in respect for human freedom everywhere and at the same time find his reverence increase for God's love by which that freedom was established.

Questions

1. When does Pesach come? How long is it to be celebrated according to the Bible?
2. How is it to be celebrated?
3. What is the Seder?
4. What is the main symbol of Pesach? What is its meaning?
5. What is the purpose of Pesach?
6. What lessons does it teach?
7. Why could Pesach be celebrated by all mankind?
8. In what way will a proper observance of the festival show itself?
9. Memorize Psalm XXIII as a beautiful expression of God's tender care of His children.

LESSON XV

Rosh Hashanah

The name of the Jewish New Year is Rosh Hashanah which means beginning of the year. It is also called the Day of Memorial and the Day of the Blowing of the Trumpet. It comes on the first day of the Jewish month Tishri. (See Leviticus XXIII, 23-24). It reminds us of the creation of the world by God and of our responsibility for our use of the things and opportunities we have through God's kindness during our stay in the world. It thus impresses upon us our indebtedness for God's loving Providence. On it we are to recall what we can of God's blessings to us and our dear ones. All of God's favors can never be remembered, they are too numerous. Many of them are showered upon us with the gentleness and abundance of a soft spring rain. Many of them enrich and rejoice us without our knowing or even thinking of the source from which they come. God's kindness to us is like a mother's love that hovers over and attends us even when we are unconscious of it. Because of this goodness of God to us throughout the year we are to try to be deserving through our moral worth. What God asks of us is character, as the prophet has so beautifully taught (see Micah VI, 8). Accordingly it is our duty on Rosh Hashanah to examine carefully our lives during the year just

closed in order to discover our short-comings so that we may, as a token of our appreciation of God's goodness, see where and how we may improve ourselves for the future. None of us should ever consider himself as beneath improvement and certainly none may ever think that he needs no further improvement. Our ancient Jewish teachers taught that God observes and judges us every moment of our lives, but on Rosh Hashanah He makes a special examination of our character, causing us to pass in review before Him as a shepherd examines his flock, in order to determine the value of our lives at the year's close, and thus to allot to each his proper portion for the new year.

On Rosh Hashanah the shofar is blown in our houses of worship with the accompaniment of beautiful appropriate prayers as a sort of call and reminder to our conscience to stir itself and take account of our moral condition. Hence the day is called Day of Memorial and of the Blowing of the Trumpet. The shofar also brings to mind the dramatic story of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac (see Genesis XXII), which is read from the Torah on the day, wherein we are told how God in His providential care supplied a ram as a substitute for the sacrifice of Isaac. The shofar thus also suggests the comforting and encouraging thought so appropriate to the beginning of a new year that if we like Abraham do our duty, God will attend us with His kindly assistance. Rosh Hashanah is a time of

great joy when every true Israelite will try to add by wish or gift to the gladness of others. Children whose parents are still spared to them should take special thought at the approach of the day to give father and mother some unexpected pleasure always keeping in mind that to rejoice one's parents is to rejoice God.

Questions

1. When does the Jewish New Year come?
2. By what names is it called? What do they mean?
3. Of what does the day remind us?
4. How are we to show our appreciation of God's goodness?
5. What is said to be God's attitude to us on Rosh Hashanah?
6. What is the shofar intended to suggest to us?
7. Mention a special filial duty at Rosh Hashanah. Suggest some ways in which children can best rejoice their parents at this time.

LESSON XVI

Yom Ha-Kippurim

or Yom Kippur, as it is more popularly called, is the Day of Atonement. It comes on the tenth day of the Jewish month, Tishri (see Leviticus XXIII, 26-32). It is the most solemn day of Jewish observance. It is a day of fasting and worship, a day whereon we are to turn away from our usual occupations and interests, and through sincere self-examination discover and acknowledge to ourselves before God whatever wrong we may have done in the preceding year, in order to obtain forgiveness. To secure forgiveness we must first repent the wrong we have done and atone or make up for it by replacing it with what is right.

The power of repentance according to Jewish teaching is truly remarkable. It is the most certain means of recovering God's favor which we lose through wrong-doing. Our ancient Jewish teachers taught, that the moral standing of those who have done wrong and truly repented is higher than that of those who never did any wrong at all. The prophet Ezekiel (XVIII, 21-23) gives a brief statement of our doctrine of repentance which ought to be memorized.

There is a wealth of beautiful teachings imparted by the Day of Atonement, two of which deserve special notice. The first of these is what is called the doctrine of human fallibility, which

means that, as the very interesting Book of Ecclesiastes (VII, 20) has expressed it, "no man is so righteous upon earth that he should do always good, and never sin." Not one of us, no matter how intelligent or cultured, can justly claim to be and do day by day throughout his life, all that God requires. This truth lies at the basis of the Jewish Day of Atonement. Our shortcoming in God's eye makes necessary an opportunity for atonement and forgiveness.

Because of this need of atonement of each and every one of us, Yom Kippur teaches, as the second beautiful truth that is worthy of particular attention, that the God whom we worship is a Heavenly Father who never forsakes His children in their hour of need, who is grieved when we do wrong and is ever ready to receive and forgive us when we repent of our sins and try to do better. Accordingly, Judaism teaches that we need no priest or saviour to plead for us and thus to act as mediator between God and ourselves. God is always near us even when at times He seems to be distant and indifferent. Whether we find Him or not depends entirely upon ourselves. Read Psalm CXLV and you will learn that God is near to all who call upon Him if they only call in sincerity and truth. This Psalm also teaches of the loving-kindness of God which is mentioned so frequently in the beautiful service of the Day of Atonement. Indeed, this Psalm is so noble in expression, so tender in principle and so lofty

in spirit that no cultured person should be ignorant of it. It should certainly be familiar to every Jew from whose people it came.

The purpose of the fast on the Day of Atonement is to afflict ourselves as a token of our regret and remorse for the past and to show by the sacrifice we thus make of our comfort, our pleasure, and of our material profit, that we are in earnest in our determination to do and be in the future what we should.

The most important lesson of the Day of Atonement for our moral welfare may be said to be the awful emphasis it places upon human responsibility. It tells us again and again, as if it would prevent us from overlooking or forgetting, that the wrongs we do must be atoned, that God who is a Being of tender mercy is also a stern and exacting Judge who will hold us responsible for the use we make of our lives and earthly opportunities. God is patient and seems at times to ignore us and thus let us escape, but in time we shall have to render an account and take the consequences. The doctrine of God's mercy and justice as taught by the Day of Atonement is expressed with such majesty and beauty in Exodus XXXIV, 6-7, that it would be valuable to know that quotation by heart.

Questions

1. When does Yom Kippur come?
2. How is to be observed?

3. What is its purpose?
4. What is the value of repentance according to Jewish teaching?
5. What two teachings of Yom Kippur deserve special notice?
6. What does Psalm CXLV teach of God's nearness and loving kindness?
7. What is the purpose of the fast?
8. What may be regarded as the most important lesson of Yom Kippur for our moral welfare? What does it teach of God's mercy and justice as contained in Exodus XXXIV?
9. Try to memorize Psalm CXLV.

LESSON XVII

Sukkoth

Sukkoth, or the Festival of Booths or Tabernacles, comes on the fifteenth day of the seventh Jewish month Tishri. It is celebrated seven days. It is followed by an eighth day also held sacred under the name of Shemini Atzereth, or Festival of Conclusion, which serves as an opportunity to review and emphasize once again the lofty teachings of the holy days preceding. In many Jewish houses of worship, the day after the Festival of Conclusion is observed joyously as Simchath Torah, or Festival of Rejoicing over the Torah, the five Books of Moses, the closing portion of which is read on that day. On the following Sabbath the reading of the Torah is begun again and continued Sabbath after Sabbath until the end is reached at the close of another year. In this way the Jews have through the ages shown their respect for the Bible which contains God's teachings together with the beginnings of Jewish history, and therefore forms the basis of our history and our religion. We should accordingly ever regard the Torah with deep reverence just as we view with deep feeling the flag of our country. The admiration and love for the Torah, which the Jews have ever entertained, is beautifully expressed in Psalm XIX, 8-11.

The symbols of Sukkoth are the Sukkah, or

booth, which is made of boughs and plants beautifully decorated within with flowers and fruits. This is usually built where possible out under the open heaven, and a part of each day of the festival is spent within it. There prayers are said and food eaten. In the house of worship a symbol is used during the festal services called Lulav and Esrog, which represents four different kinds of plants that grew in ancient Palestine.

The purpose of Sukkoth, as we are taught in Leviticus XXIII, 39-43, is to remind us of God's loving care of Israel when they dwelt in frail booths in their dangerous journey of forty years through the wilderness on their way from Egypt, the land of bondage, to Palestine, the land of promise, which God had long before promised to their forefathers.

The Lulav and Esrog call our attention to the products of the earth which God, as the source of all things in nature, causes to grow for the use and enjoyment of His creatures. The Lulav includes a palm-branch, a twig of myrtle, and a branch of willow. The Esrog is a sweet scented lemon-shaped citron. Our ancient Jewish teachers pointed out that these four products suggest by their appearance the four important parts of our body: the heart, the spinal column, the eyes, and the lips, and when they are held up before us in God's service on Sukkoth, they should remind us to praise and worship God with our entire being.

Sukkoth is, in keeping with what has been said, a festival of gratitude. It is the Jewish Thanksgiving Day. It renews in us year by year the thought of God's presence and protection in nature and in human life, but more especially in the life of Israel throughout their wonderful history. It thus appeals to the heart of every true Jew for grateful acknowledgement and appreciation. This appreciation can be best shown, as our religion requires, by employing the blessings we enjoy in bringing blessings into the less fortunate lives of other children of God who are more than ever our brothers because of their need. In this way we can best prove our devotion to God and His teachings as they are contained in the Torah over which there is rejoicing on Simchath Torah at the close of Sukkoth.

Questions

1. When is Sukkoth? How long is it celebrated?
2. When is Shemini Atzereth? What is its purpose?
3. When is Simchath Torah? What is its significance?
4. What are the symbols of Sukkoth?
5. What is the purpose of Sukkoth?
6. What do the Lulav and Esrog suggest? What do they remind of according to our ancient Jewish teachers?
7. What kind of a festival is Sukkoth?
8. How may we best show our gratitude?

LESSON XVIII

The Chosen People

When the Israelites were gathered at Sinai to receive God's laws, God informed them that they were to be unto Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This is a very frequent teaching throughout the Bible and in all later Jewish literature. This is what is referred to when the Jews are spoken of as God's chosen people. It is given a conspicuous mention on the Sabbath in every Jewish house of worship just before the Torah is read when a benediction is spoken in which God is praised for having chosen the Israelites from among all nations and given them His Torah, or religious teaching and laws.

There is no teaching of ours more important than that wherein we claim to be God's chosen people. It is commonly misunderstood by Jews themselves as well as by non-Jews.

To be God's chosen people does not mean that we Jews have been preferred by God to the neglect of other peoples. It does not imply that we alone are God's people. It does not therefore justify conceit and arrogance. The Bible frequently points out that other peoples are God's children in whom He is interested as He is in us. Read the sublimely beautiful, but very much misunderstood, Book of Jonah and you will find that so-called heathen are objects of

God's loving care. Our ancient Jewish teachers said that when the cruel Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, and the Israelites sang, God rebuked them saying that the ill-fated people of Egypt were also his children, and though they suffered a just penalty there should be no rejoicing.

What we are to understand by the title of a chosen people is that the Jews are in their true nature more religious than others, and that as a result of this God-given nature of theirs they were the first to impart to the world what even our present civilization considers the best teachings about God and goodness. To every people God has imparted some gift. To us He gave the blessing of a religious nature. Why we were preferred in this we can't say. We only know that it is so. But this we are taught with frequent emphasis, that we may be considered God's chosen ones only so long as we are true to our religious nature and to the duties it imposes upon us.

The duties of being God's chosen people are these. We are to regard ourselves as priests of God whose religious function is to preserve and proclaim to the rest of humanity the teachings which God has imparted to our people. We must to that end know those teachings as extensively as we can so that we can admire them and have enthusiasm for them. We cannot admire what we do not know. A Jew that is ignorant is disloyal to his religious duty and un-

able to properly represent his people. We must further not only know the teachings of our religion but, what is of even greater importance, we must, as far as we can, illustrate the beauty of those teachings in the conduct of our own lives. Every Jew should try to be to the rest of the world an object lesson of his religious faith. Our motto in all things should be "Excelsior." We should strive to lead mankind in all that makes for human progress and betterment. We must never be content to be merely as good or no worse than others. We should aspire to be always at least a little better than others. And every Jew should have this thought no matter how obscure or insignificant he may think himself to be. The good name and religious success of all Jews is affected by the conduct of each and every individual Jew. Finally, in brief, to be God's chosen people means always to live so as to be regarded as God's choice people.

Questions

1. What does the title of "God's chosen people" refer to?
2. What meanings should not be attached to the title?
3. Read the book of Jonah, tell the story and point out what it teaches with reference to God's love for non-Jews.
4. Give an illustration of this same truth from ancient Jewish teaching.

5. What shall we understand by "Chosen People" as applied to the Jews?
6. What duties are included in being God's Chosen People?
7. Read the following Biblical portions and point out what they teach with reference to Israel as the Chosen People. Exodus XIX, 1-6; Genesis, XII, 3; Isaiah XLIII, 21, XLIX, 1-3; Psalm CV, especially 44-45.

LESSON XIX

The Sinaic Revelation

The Ten Commandments and other teachings given till now are part of what is called the Sinaic Revelation which means the revelation which God made of Himself and His teachings on Mount Sinai. All that that revelation included cannot be taught here. But it should in time be known by every intelligent Jew. What we ought to know, however, is that the Jewish religion as contained in the Sinaic Revelation aims to have man live his entire life from birth to burial in keeping with God's will. Whatever we do must be with a thought of God. And so you will find laws pertaining to eating, dressing, ploughing, sowing, reaping, lending money, treating hired people, etc., the aim of which is to make us holy or God-like. Religion, according to Judaism as taught at Sinai, includes everything that affects human life. It says, "holy shall ye be for I the Lord your God am holy."

Later Jewish history introduced new laws, customs, teachings, and sacred occasions, but they were usually in keeping with the spirit and principles of our religion as taught at Sinai. We shall speak of two festal days now commonly observed by the Jews: one, Purim, occurring in the Bible; the other, Chanukah, long after the Bible was completed.

Questions

1. What is meant by the Sinaic Relation?
2. What is the aim of the Jewish religion?
3. What, according to Judaism, does religion include?
4. Read Exodus XXI, Leviticus XIX, and other Biblical portions, and give illustrations of the many things our religion includes.

LESSON XX

Purim

Purim comes on the 14th day of the Jewish month Adar. It reminds us of the saving of the Jews by Queen Esther when they were threatened with destruction through the cruelty of Haman. The story of the event of which Purim reminds us is contained in the Biblical book Esther. It is a dramatic story well worth reading apart from its connection with Purim.

Purim is celebrated in our houses of worship by the reading of the story of Esther from a scroll called the "Megillah" which means scroll. It is further observed in our homes and elsewhere with merry-making. It is a time of cheer reminding as it does of the happiness of our ancestors in their time of deliverance from a destruction that seemed certain. True cheer, however, is not and cannot be selfish. It is, therefore, our duty at Purim to do what we can to bring brightness into the lives of others, especially those who, through misfortune, are compelled to suffer gloom.

Upon reading the Book of Esther it will be noticed by the careful reader that God is nowhere mentioned in the story. This might seem strange in a book which is part of the great Bible wherein one of the main purposes is to teach us about God. We must not, however, think that God only exists where His name is

mentioned. Sometimes He is not present even when His name is expressed. God is wherever His spirit is. His spirit is present wherever there is wisdom, beauty or goodness. And so, although God is not mentioned in the story of Esther, His spirit in her bravery and in the goodness of Mordecai shows that He is there. His presence may also be found in the victory of right and in the punishment of wrong which the book so interestingly relates.

Questions

1. When does Purim come?
2. Of what does it remind us?
3. Read the story and answer the following: (a) Was Vashti right in refusing the request of the King? (b) Was Mordecai right in refusing to bow to Haman? (c) Read Psalm XXXVII, 12-16 and Proverbs XXVI, 27 and show how they may be applied to Haman?
4. How is Purim celebrated?
5. Point out where God may be found in the story of Esther.
6. Read the following Biblical portions and tell what they teach about the presence of God: Job XII, 7-10; Psalms XIX, XXIX; Genesis XXVIII; Exodus III; Psalm XCVII, 2. Memorize Psalm CXXXIX, 7-12.

LESSON XXI

Chanukah

Chanukah, or the Festival of Dedication, comes on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth Jewish month Kislev and is celebrated eight days. Lights are kindled each evening with appropriate prayers, beginning with one light the first eve and increasing the number by one each succeeding evening until eight are lighted on the closing night. The lights are not to be used for illumination in connection with any of the usual occupations of the household, they are to serve solely as reminders, as messengers of certain interesting and beautiful thoughts. What they are to remind us of is the following:

It was during the second century before the Christian era. The Jewish people lived in Palestine under Syrian dominion. A senseless, cruel King, Antiochus Epiphanes, desired to strengthen his kingdom by removing all differences among his subjects. He wanted the Jews to give up their religion and abandon their religious ceremonies. He tried to prevent them from worshipping their God. He spoiled and desecrated their magnificent temple. He did not know that to true Jews there is nothing more sacred than their religion, that in behalf of it they will fight, suffer, and even die if necessary. So there arose an old Jewish man, Mattathias, in defense of his people. He and his sons raised

an army to oppose the Syrians. Soon, however, the old man died. His bravest son, called Judah the Maccabee, became leader. For three years he and his troops fought against the larger and better equipped armies of the Syrians. But, as the Prophet Zechariah (IV, 6) has said, man succeeds not by might, nor by power, but by God's spirit. The Jewish people were fighting, not as the Syrians were for human enrichment, they were inspired by devotion to God's cause. And so Judah and his followers triumphed. He drove the enemy out of Jerusalem and Palestine. He then purified and rededicated the temple. This was in the year 165 B. C. Our ancient Jewish teachers said that during the cleansing of the temple there was found a small bottle of oil which was just enough for kindling for one day the perpetual light which always burns before the ark where the Torah is kept enshrined. And yet, strange to tell when it was lighted it burned eight days. It is of these wonderful events that we are to be reminded when we look upon the little tapers that, like soldiers of light, beam brightly in Jewish homes on the evenings of the Chanukah week. They should deepen in us loyalty to our people and their religion, and strengthen our trust in God, man's greatest source of strength.

Questions

1. When is Chanukah?
2. How long and in what way is it to be celebrated?

3. Of what does it remind us? Give the story.
4. What reason is given for the kindling of the lights for eight days?
5. What should be the influence of the lights upon us?
6. Memorize Psalm CXVIII 5-9 as an illustration of the value of trust in God. Try also to memorize Psalm XCI which is frequently used as a source of consolation to mourners.

TO THE PUPIL

WITH the closing of this little book I would say a parting word to the pupils who have continued their study to this closing page.

You are about to be confirmed, to acknowledge publicly your desire to be identified with the Jewish people, to accept their religion, and thus to be true to the obligations which came to you at birth. You ought, therefore, to feel that Confirmation Day is a very sacred, serious occasion. In looking forward to and preparing for it you ought not to think too much of the clothing you will wear or of the gifts you expect or hope to receive. You will better approach and pass the solemn day if you think more of some pleasure you can give on it than of that which you may receive. Unless the celebration makes you more unselfish and more considerate as child, brother or sister, it is not sacred but a show and a sacrilege. It ought especially to make you more charitable and to this end you should on Confirmation Day connect yourself as contributor for the rest of your life to some charitable institution. If you observe the day in the way here mentioned you will be a better Jew, entitled to the respect of all who may know you, worthy of the interest and affection of those who love you, and more deserving of the blessings of the great good God of Israel and Humanity who created and preserves you.

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